

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 06464 181802Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3994

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 6464

EXDIS

EYES ONLY FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON FROM AMBASSADOR

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFO, EG, US
SUBJ: GHORBAL AND BNAI BRITH

REF CAIRO 6391,

1. AS SADAT HAD REQUESTED, I DISCUSSED WITH FAHMY TODAY THE BNAI BRITH INVITATION TO GHORBAL ALONG SIMILAR LINES TO THOSE I HAD USED WITH THE PRESIDENT. IT DEVELOPED THAT SADAT HAD NOT YET BEEN IN TOUCH WITH FAHMY ON THE MATTER AND THAT FAHMY DID NOT KNOW ABOUT SADAT'S HAVING AUTHORIZED GHORBAL TO ATTEND A TEA PARTY. ALTHOUGH I URGED THAT GHORBAL BE PERMITTED TO ACCEPT BNAI BRITH INVITATION AND ATTEND, FAHMY WAS TOTALLY NEGATIVE.

2. AFTER SOME VITRIOLIC COMMENTS ABOUT GHORBAL, HE SAID THAT HE COULD NOT AGREE TO GHORBAL PARTICIPATING IN A FORMAL BNAI BRITH FUNCTION. IT MIGHT BE GOOD FROM PUBLIC RELATIONS POINT OF VIEW IN US, BUT IT WOULD BE DISASTER FOR SADAT IN THE ARAB WORLD. EVEN SOME OF MODERATE ARAB FRIENDS, SUCH AS SAUDI ARABIA, WOULD PROTEST. HE NOTED WIFE OF EGYPTIAN AMB IN DAKAR WAS RECENTLY CHARGED WITH SHAKING HANDS WITH A ZIONIST OFFICIAL AND THAT GOE HAS RECEIVED AT LEAST TEN
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 CAIRO 06464 181802Z

PROTESTS FROM ARAB STATES. FAHMY IS NOW INVESTIGATING THE DAKAR INCIDENT AND NOTED THAT, IF FACTS AS CHARGED TURN OUT TO BE RIGHT, THE AMB WILL BE DISMISSED. IF GHORBAL ATTENDS FORMAL BNAI BRITH FUNCTION, ARAB COMPLAINTS ABOUT HIM WILL BE SUCH THAT HE WILL HAVE TO BE DISMISSED.

3. FAHMY EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT WE SHOULD BE URGING GOE TO

AUTHORIZE GHORBAL TO ATTEND. HE CHARGED THAT WE DO NOT SEEM TO APPRECIATE ARAB SITUATION. IF WE WANT SADAT TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF WORKING WITH US ON ME PEACE PROCESS ALONG LINES DISCUSSED IN WASHINGTON, WE SHOULD NOT "KILL HIM POLITICALLY" WITH THIS KIND OF THING. HE CALLED IT A POLITICAL "STUNT" BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY. I TOLD FAHMY THAT WE HAD BEEN ASSURED BY THE BNAI BRITH THAT THERE WAS NO INTENTION TO USE THE MEETING FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. FAHMY SCOFFED AND ASKED IF THIS WAS SO, WHY HAD BNAI BRITH NOT CHECKED FIRST WITH GHORBAL BEFORE SENDING THE INVITATIONS. HE PERSONALLY WOULD NOT AUTHORIZE GHORBAL TO ATTEND. IF SADAT RAISES THE MATTER WITH HIM, HE WILL RECOMMEND AGAINST GHORBAL'S ATTENDANCE.

4. COMMENT: WHILE REGRETTABLE, FAHMY'S REPLY IS PREDICTABLE. HOWEVER, HE IS PROBABLY RIGHT THAT GHORBAL'S ATTENDANCE WOULD CAUSE A FUROR IN ARAB WORLD AND WOULD DO SADAT SOME HARM IN THE ARAB WORLD. THIS KIND OF MYOPIA IS PART OF THE TRAGEDY OF THE MIDDLE EAST.
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